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Sandinistas, Qaddafi fund U.S. protest

By George Archibald
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Organizers of nationwide protests and planned civil disobedience this weekend against Reagan administration foreign policies have received \$3 million from Nicaragua's Marxist government, according to a source with close ties to the Managua regime.

The funds, secretly channeled by diplomatic pouch to the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington and then to protest organizers across the country, came from grants to the Managua government from Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, said Carlos Rondon, an ex-Sandinista military official with ties to the regime's hierarchy.

Col. Qaddafi gave "several hundred million dollars" in military and economic aid to Nicaragua's Marxist rulers following a March visit to Tripoli by Victor Tirado Lopez, comandante of the Sandinista

revolution, Mr. Rondon said.

"Libya puts the money into a secret fund that [Nicaraguan Foreign Minister] Miguel D'Escoto manages," Mr. Rondon said in a telephone interview from Denver, where he now lives.

"Definitely untrue," said Nicaraguan Embassy spokeswoman Sara Lee. "It's just a try to discredit or diminish the value of the effort of the organizers and of the American people participating in the march and its activities," she said.

Mr. Rondon's account was corroborated by a former longtime U.S. legal attache in Central America, who called the Sandinista funding "standard operating procedure" to build public opposition to anti-Marxist policies in the United States.

Mr. Rondon broke with the regime after the Sandinista revolution that toppled former Nicaraguan strong-

man Anastasio Somoza in 1979.

However, he said he received word from high-level sources in Managua that Nicaragua had provided \$3 million to organize this weekend's protests.

The funds were "distributed to all those committees across the United States out of the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington," he said.

Demonstrations opposing U.S. policies in Central America, the Middle East and southern Africa are being organized by the left-wing Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa — also known as the April 25th Coalition.

The coalition consists of about 50 left-wing groups, including the Communist Party USA; the Mobilization for Survival; the Christic Institute; the U.S. Peace Council, identified by the State Department as a Soviet front; the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CIS-PES), which supports the Marxist guerrillas there; the pro-Marxist African National Congress; TransAfrica; and the November 29th Committee for Palestine.

National protest coordinator is Mobilization for Survival leader Leslie Cagan, 39, a veteran pro-Castro activist and former instructor for the Communist Party USA's Center for Marxist Education.

Coalition leaders say they expect to transport 60,000 to 100,000 protesters to Washington for the weekend's activities, including planned

civil disobedience at the CIA's McLean headquarters.

Busloads of demonstrators will be transported to about 70 cities for simultaneous weekend rallies.

Amy Carter, the 19-year-old daughter of former President Jimmy Carter, and Abbie Hoffman, 50, founder of the Youth Interna-

tional Party, or YIP, will participate in the Washington protest, organizers said.

The so-called "Yippies" disrupted the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Promotional leaflets for the Washington protest, distributed throughout the East Coast by the People's Anti-War Mobilization/All-Peoples Congress, call on the administration to "Support [African revolutionary groups] ANC and SWAPO," "Free Palestine," "Support the Sandinistas," "No Aid to Israel," "Out of El Salvador" and "Free Puerto Rico."

"The way to fight back is to mobilize a united, militant movement of black, Latin, Asian, Arab, Native [American] and white; lesbian, gay and straight; women and men; disabled and able-bodied, in a struggle," the leaflet says.

Ms. Cagan, who organized similar protests during the 1960s against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, termed reports of secret Libyan and Nicaraguan financing for the protest activities "total fantasy."

"I cannot help but laugh hysterically. I mean, that is so unbelievably far from the truth," she said.

"Some of these local coalitions [in 125 cities and colleges] can raise money to help subsidize [bus and train] tickets for low-income people," she said. But she placed the total cost to organize the nationwide demonstrations at somewhere "between \$150,000 and \$170,000."

The reported Libyan-Sandinista connection to the protests was a major reason why the April 25th rallies were repudiated by Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, and John T. Joyce, president of the International Union of Bricklayers & Associated Craftsmen, said sources close to the union officials.

In a letter to AFL-CIO leaders March 23, Mr. Kirkland warned his 13 million fellow trade unionists not to participate in the protests. Mr. Joyce directed a similar appeal to his

union's 135,000 members on April 2.

"Today, as in years gone by, there is a re-emergence of radical left-wing groups dedicated to putting unions, as well as religious organizations, to those groups' purposes," Mr. Joyce wrote.

"Anyone who knows or remembers the popular fronts put together

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by the communists in the 1930s will know precisely how the April Mobilization works and what it is all about," he said.

Coalition leaders have spent several months organizing student groups, union members and so-called peace activists from politically oriented religious and minority groups, according to the Daily World, newspaper of the U.S. Communist Party, and The Militant, another pro-Soviet publication.

The U.S. demonstrations have been publicized worldwide by Barricada Internacional, weekly newspaper of the Marxist FSLN party in Nicaragua.

"This event marks the first time a national demonstration underlines the common suffering of the peoples of Central America and South Africa caused by U.S. foreign policies," the tabloid reported Feb. 26.

The Sandinista newspaper called attention to notable endorsers of the protest, such as Catholic Archbishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit and Kenneth T. Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees.

Protest organizers "call on groups around the world to show their solidarity by holding demonstrations in front of all U.S. embassies and consulates on this date," Barricada said.